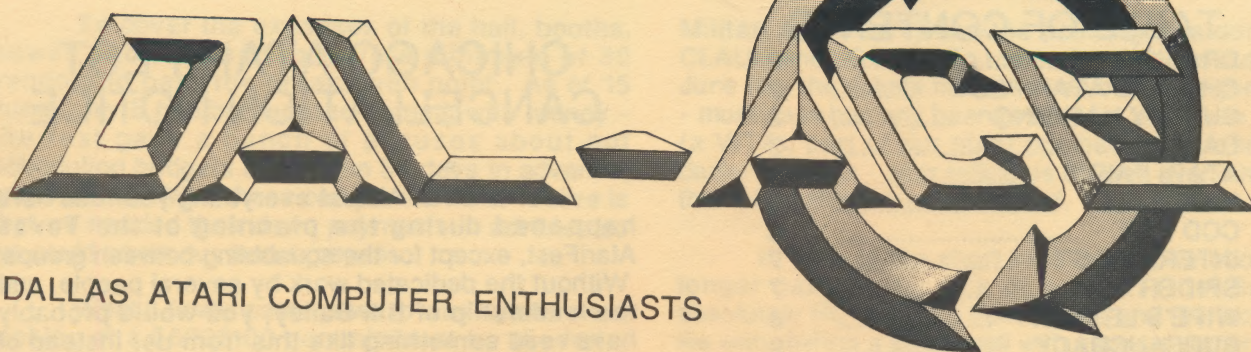


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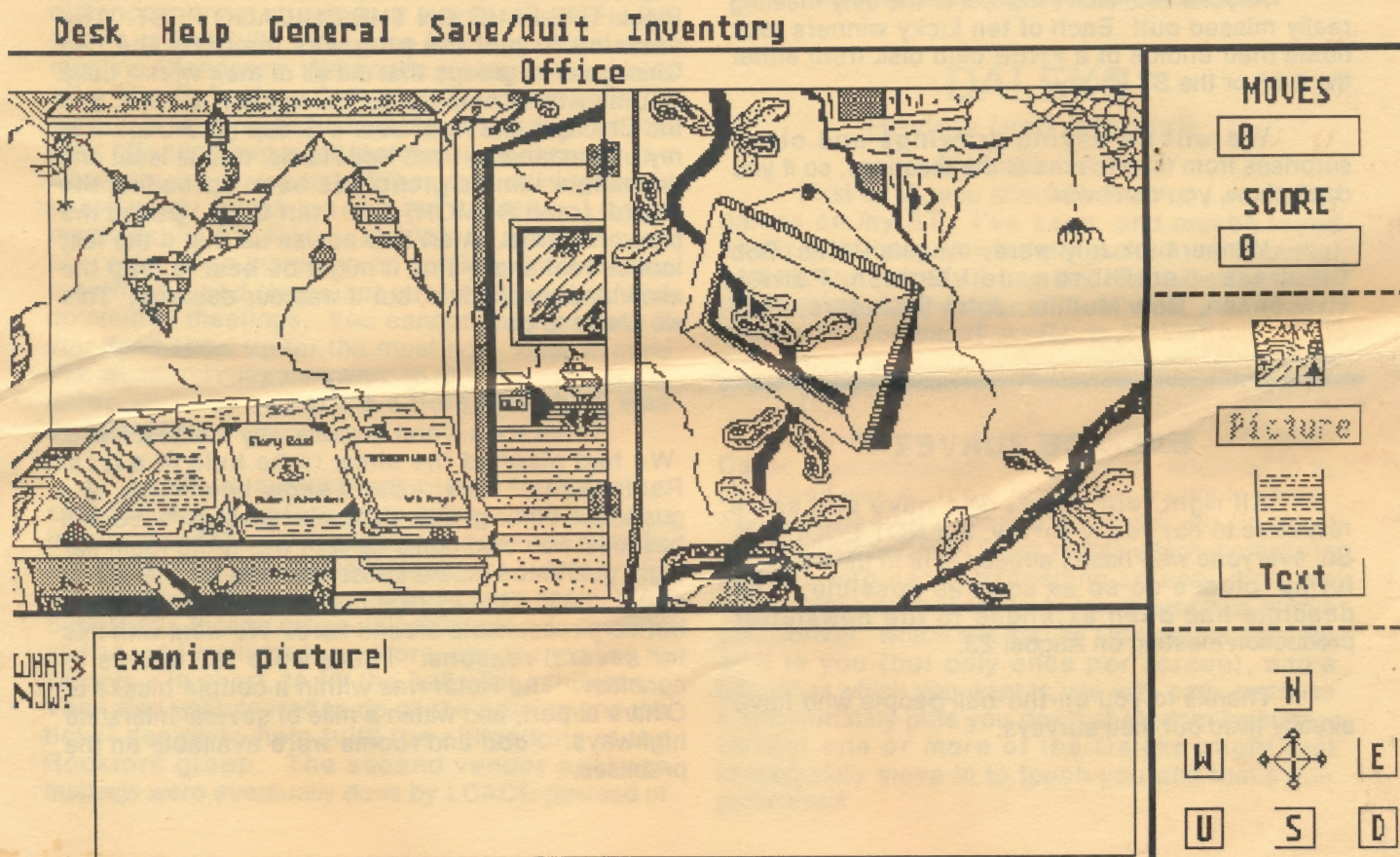
DALLAS ATARI COMPUTER ENTHUSIASTS

AUGUST 1987 ISSUE

NEW ST BBS # 255 - 8256

REVIEWS:

GATEWAY CAD 3D HARDBALL
INTERLINK ST



Scene from GateWay (TM) Copyright Priority Software

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SURPRISE DRAWING!

Anyone who didn't make it to the July meeting really missed out! Each of ten lucky winners took home their choice of a FREE club disk from either the 8-bit or the ST library.

We will be having drawings and other surprises from time to time at the meetings, so if you don't show, you don't win.

Winners for July were: Angela Burns, Bob Childress, Ken Gibson, Jeff Golden, Patrick Hykkonnen, Dow Mullins, John Saunders, Tom Simes, Jim Tedford, and Rene Tucker.

DAL-ACE SURVEY

All right, out there. We have had some response to our yearly survey, but NOT ENOUGH! So, everyone who hasn't already sent in their survey forms, please do so as soon as possible. The deadline has been extended to the newsletter production meeting on August 23.

Thanks to you on-the-ball people who have already filled out their surveys.

CHICAGO ATARIFEST CANCELLATION NOTICE

JLP NOTE: Almost everything you read here happened during the planning of the Texas AtariFest, except for the squabbling between groups. Without the dedicated work by several people, and the leadership of Bill Bailey, you would probably have read something like this from us, instead of enjoying the show.

This is a notice that the AtariFest, originally scheduled for Chicago on the 25th and 26th of July, 1987, has been officially cancelled. There were several reasons for doing this, but FIRST and FOREMOST, let me dispel three major rumors that have been spread about the 'Fest in Chicago.

FIRST: The 'Fest in Chicago did NOT at ANY time have any problems with the unions. This is a rumor spread out of Michigan through a misunderstanding on their part, and has not at any time been true.

SECOND: Last Spring, a Wisconsin group started rumors that the Chicago 'Fest was cancelled - at THAT time. WRONG! It may be now, but not previously.

THIRD AND FOREMOST: ATARI DID NOT PULL THE PLUG ON THE CHICAGO FEST. The decision to pull the plug was made by the two Chicago area groups that did all of their work - Lake County Atari Computer Enthusiasts (LCACE), and the ChicagoLand Atari User's Group (CLAUG). It is my understanding from Neil Harris, that at least one downstate Illinois group has been spreading the 'Word' (read RUMOR) that Atari Corp. pulled the plug. Not true. Atari DID advise us that if the fest looked real shaky that it might be best to drop the show and reschedule, but it was our decision. This we chose to do.

WHY THE 'FEST FAILED

There are several reasons why the 'fest failed. We had planned the show to be held in a local Ramada Inn. Now, I don't know how much of a guarantee other groups in hotels had to give, but the best deal we could come up with was a 100 room per night guarantee plus a substantial fee for the 12700 sq. ft. hall. This IS high compared to other cities, but very reasonable around here. We went with this for several reasons. There were NO unions to consider. The Hotel was within a couple blocks of O'hare airport, and within a mile of several Interstate highways. Food and rooms were available on the premises.

To cover the expenses of the hall, booths, power, etc., we had to have a minimum of 30 vendors to pass the break-even point. As of 15 June, only 5 had bothered to commit with money - the rest gave a bunch of excuses about not scheduling budgets more than 30 days in advance, and the like. What these companies fail to realize is that we needed their down payments in advance so we could cover our own expenses.

What it finally came down to was that we were looking at a \$6000.00 commitment for the hotel alone, with only 5 vendors. Our phone calls and letters to the lagging companies failed to do any good - they wouldn't even send a down payment.

Last October when Sandi was in town, we were told that if we had trouble getting vendors to commit, that Atari would give them a push for us. In May, we went to Sandi, and were told then that she couldn't do that, and we were on our own. We found out too late from Neil Harris, that this was NOT the official Atari position. (JLP: We didn't have this problem, but instead had equipment promised that didn't show.)

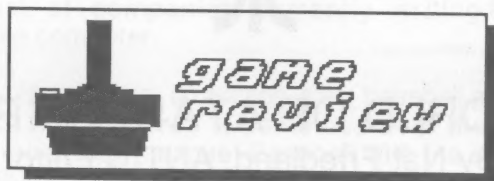
Secondly, the groups involved were spread out over too wide an area. In all, there were over 300 miles between the northernmost (Militari) and southernmost (BASE) groups with CLAUG, LCACE, SCAT, and RACC in between. Those of you who are thinking about organizing a fest, keep that in mind. It is impossible to keep in good contact over a large distance without running up extraordinarily large phone or gas bills. We also had a problem with meeting attendance. When the meetings were held after the Suburban Chicago (SCAT) meetings, almost all six groups attended (except Militari, who only attended two or three meetings through the whole course of events). When the meetings were unanimously scheduled after the CLAUG or LCACE meetings, SCAT, RACC, and Militari never showed up - even when there was no conflict with their own meetings - and these accounted for half of the committee meetings. You cannot communicate if you don't show up for the meetings. Bear in mind that all attending groups agreed on the meeting dates and places before a time and place was definitely set.

Lastly, if a group volunteers to perform a specific job, it is up to them to make sure it is done. In our case, Militari volunteered to copy and compile the packet for our second mailings. After they volunteered, we never heard from them again. The Suburban Chicago group volunteered to do the first and second mailings to vendors, and the mailing to dealers - in short, to fill the hall with exhibitors. They also volunteered to do all the printing and the ticket design to help fulfil the obligations of the Rockford group. The second vendor package mailings were eventually done by LCACE (instead of

Militari and SCAT) and the printing was done by CLAUG and LCACE. To top it off, we found out on 6 June that the tickets had not even been designed yet - much less had any been printed for pre-show sales (a VITAL part of our plan) nor had they done any dealer mailings - after telling us for well over a month that it had all been taken care of.

In view of the short time before we could no longer cancel, the lack of support from Sandi, absolutely NO advance ticket sales and the fact that we were hitting a stone wall with vendors (other than the 5 we had) we decided to cancel. We are currently thinking of completely re-organizing the committee with a rescheduled date next year, but nothing has been decided yet. If we do reschedule, you can bet there will be several MAJOR changes made from the first attempt.

If you have any questions, comments, or (hopefully) suggestions, leave mail on GENIE to G.FEID, on CompuServe to number 74146,162, or on the 'Once In A BLUE MOON' BBS at 312-457-2219 - 24 hours a day, 300/1200 baud.



DALEKS

Review (and editorial)
by Bob Dain

First of all, you should know that I don't play games on my ST. I've seen, and maybe toyed briefly with many wonderfully crafted and beautiful games, but mostly I use my machine for word processing, taking care of business, and trying, usually not too successfully, to figure out how an application program.

So why am I writing a review of DALEKS? Cause I somehow got hooked on it, addicted to it, obsessed with it. It's a maddeningly simple game. The playing field contains good old you (in robot guise) and a bunch of Dalek robots which increase in number with each succeeding screen. You are defenseless except for your intelligence, a "sonic screwdriver" which will zap all Daleks that sidle up next to you (but only once per screen), and a teleporter which you want to use with care, because it unfortunately puts you down at random locations, so that one or more of the Daleks might just immediately move in to touch you and that's it -- game over!

So how do you survive and win points? As the Daleks inexorably move in all directions toward you, just get them to crash into each other until they're all gone and you're on to the next screen. I don't really know what the high score is, but let me know if you top my current 6290.

All you have to do to own this terrific game is to download it from the ST bulletin board! Yep, DALEKS is just another example of excellent programs which their authors have freely shared with us. You will recognize shareware by a statement from the author, and by a name and address to which you are gently asked to send five, ten or fifteen bucks.

If you are like me, there are several shareware programs which you use often, so whether you downloaded the program, or found it on a club disk; if you like the game, use the utility or the application program, or whatever - send money. The programmer deserves your applause, and that's the way to encourage the author to write more good stuff - and to upgrade the programs they have already given us.



WORLD OF ATARI FAIRE

By Nat Friedland, ANTIC Editor

ANTIC Publishing Inc.

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Santa Clara Show Debuts: "Finalized" Atari laser printer - Near-beta Word Perfect,... & more.

With all the other Atari Fairs that took place during the past 12 months and the huge Consumer Electronics Show just three weeks ago, it was surprising to find so much new to see last weekend during the hastily-organized World of Atari Faire at the year-old Santa Clara Convention Center.

But several unfamiliar companies with impressive ST software made their Atari Fair debuts last weekend. And a near-production version of the Atari SLM804 laser printer had its first public showing. This report concentrates on products that have not been reported on previously.

The Atari laser printer is smaller and lighter than most current models, but seems just about as fast and sharp. It was operating in Diablo 630 emulation with a 4Mb Mega ST running a pre-release version of the Microsoft Write word processor with a WYSIWYG display. The laser controller board is in a modem-sized box cabled between the ST's

high-speed Direct Memory Access (DMA) port and the printer. This controller box also has a second DMA port for connecting a hard disk. This 300-dots-per-inch printer supports Atari's GDOS (which automatically uses the highest resolution available to a printing device). We picked up a selection of the sharp graphics and multi-font printouts that the Atari SLM804 kept churning out throughout the day. Late summer or September is the current estimated market arrival for the Atari Desktop Publishing System.

At a neighboring booth, Word Perfect was showing a near-beta version of the forthcoming ST edition of its best selling word processor. The GEM-based software, due in September, looked extremely fast and powerful. It will list at \$395 but is often discounted by more than 50% in the IBM version. The WP rep said that the company is working closely with Publishing Partner's developers to assure immediate desktop publishing compatibility for the word processor.

Programmers will love Omniware's new Edit/Booster, an ST text editor that also generates GEM code by mouse. Select "Draw A Circle" from a drop-down menu and the GEM code appears in your program. The version currently on sale just works with C, but updates for GFA BASIC, Personal Pascal and Modula-2 are promised soon. Omniware, based in Bellevue, Washington, also showed a desk accessory controller for the widely used Hewlett-Packard Laserjet printer and an H-P terminal emulator.

Iliad Software of Orem, Utah, another new entry, showed a powerful, user-friendly CAD/drawing program, Athena II, selling for \$99.95. Athena requires a 1Mb ST, but functions in either color or monochrome. Coming soon is a circuit-testing simulation program called Circuit Maker. The company was also showing a multiuser, multitasking operating system, PDOS, which is similar to the system used on 68000-based VME workstations.

A wide-ranging product line of specialized business applications for the ST was shown by Hi-Tech Advisors of Winter Haven, Florida. Their \$199 titles included Church Manager, Service Station Manager, Video Store Manager, Inventory Pro and Sales Pro Plus. Mail Pro handles custom mailing lists and form letters for just \$69.

SBT of Sausalito, California kicked off a line of dBASE III business accounting modules based on the ST's dBMAN clone.

Beckemeyer Development Tools of Oakland, California showed their latest addition, a touch-screen restaurant menu system. The demonstration model for a Chinese restaurant was almost frighteningly complete and efficient.

Two image scanners were shown at the fair. Navarone, of Sonora, California had a \$1,239 ST system including the Canon IX-12 scanner. The simpler \$99.95 IMG Scan from Seymour-Radix of Irving, TX used a small box that tapes to the print head of any dot matrix printer that supports graphics.

Old-timer Lou Schwing of Astra Systems was gleefully demonstrating the ruggedness of his HD+ unit which combines an 20Mb hard disk and a double-sided ST 3.5" disk. The HD+ was notably cool and even kept operating as he waved it in the air and laid it on its side.

DeskCart, a \$99.95 cartridge from Quantum Micro of Liverpool, New York, is a real-time clock/calendar with a full set of Sidekick-type desk accessories including a filer, calculator, address book, notebook, macros, RAMdisk driver and other utilities. The cartridge format is claimed to save memory and operate faster.

The World of Atari was busy and profitable for most exhibitors throughout its Friday-Saturday run. The thriving Antic booth was showing upcoming ST graphics software from The Catalog - Cyber Paint, a paint program that creates images for animation with Cybermate, and Spectrum 512, a smooth-lined, ultra-clear paint program that can display all the ST's 512 colors simultaneously.

HARDBALL

Written by Dan Thompson

Reviewed by Bill Sheppard

Reprinted courtesy of Computing Today, found on GENie

SCORECARD:

Features - 9	Performance - 8
Graphics - 10	Sound - 8
Ease of Play - 9	Error Handling - 10
Documentation - 8	Support - 9

From: Accolade, 20833 Stevens Creek Blvd.,
Cupertino, CA 95014 (408)446-5757
Suggested List: \$29.95

Have you ever seen a game on the shelf, looked over the package, decided that it looked fantastic, and then noticed that it was only for another computer? Well, I first saw Hardball about a year ago, and the packaging was very enticing. However, much to my dismay, it was only available for the Commodore 64. Well, Accolade is now porting some of their titles over to the Atari 8-bit line, and if Hardball is any indication of future offerings, they will be a very welcome addition to the list of companies currently writing for our favorite computer.

Hardball is an arcade-style baseball game for one or two players. It combines both the action features of Star League Baseball with the strategic possibilities of Micro League Baseball. Hardball will allow for player substitution, choice of pitch, choice of swing, stealing bases, bunting, and designated hitter. Several graphics screens are used during game play. During the pitch, a view coming from an imaginary camera immediately behind the pitcher is used. As the ball travels towards the batter, it appears to get smaller. During this view, a small overhead view appears in the bottom corner, allowing the pitcher to keep tabs on the baserunners. Upon hitting the ball, the view switches to either the left or right half of the outfield, as seen from the catcher's viewpoint. The views.

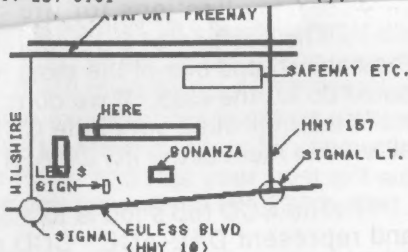
Hardball is heavily copy-protected, but back-ups can be made with Happy revision 7.0. One back-up copy may be purchased for \$10.00. Free replacements of defective disks are made for 90 days; a replacement fee of \$10.00 will be charged after the warranty period.

Virtually all game play is done with the joystick. For the pitcher, one of four pitches (depending upon the pitcher selected) is selected by pushing the joystick in one of the main directions, and then pushing the button. Pitches allowed include offspeed, slider, changeup, curveball,

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sinker, fastball, and fastball!, which is a real screaming version of the normal fastball. The batter then chooses to bunt (by pushing the joystick down), and if there are base runners, whether any of them should steal. Once both batter and pitcher have made these selections, they are presented with a new set of choices. The pitcher now chooses where the pitch should go (high, low, outside, inside, or right over the plate). Once the pitch has been thrown, the batter can swing straight away, high, low, inside, or outside. When the ball is hit, the view changes to that which would be seen by the catcher. The computer selects which player would be most appropriate to retrieve the ball, and moving the joystick will move this player. If the computer selects the an infield player to get the ball, and it passes this player, then the outfielder closest to the ball will become active. Once the player has retrieved the ball, you can throw to any of the bases by moving the joystick towards that base, and pressing the button. If no selection is made, after a few seconds the ball will be returned to the pitcher.

A sense of perspective is used by having the rate of throw be proportional to the distance the player is from home plate. For instance, when the centerfielder is throwing to the catcher from deep centerfield, the throw will begin moving very slowly, and pick up speed as it approaches home plate. Each player has several managerial options available. The batting team is allowed to make player substitutions, and exchange positions.

The pitching team may make those two changes, as well as set up the infield for a double play, and shift the outfield left or right. An intentional walk may also be called. Full statistics are shown for each player on the team, and there are roughly twice as many players on each team as can be fielded, giving the player ample choice in player substitution. The same players always make up each team, and their statistics remain constant. The two teams are the Champs and the All-stars, and you may choose which team is home and which is away, which is played by the computer (in single-player mode), and whether a designated player will be used.

Game play is relatively easy to learn. All joystick options are displayed on-screen at all times, and many of the movements are intuitive. Response is generally good, although occasionally I found that I had to try twice to get a fielder to throw the ball. There were a few small points about the game I didn't care for. Once you decide to go to the next base, you cannot go back. This eliminates any chance to be caught in a 'hot-box'. Also, I prefer to have control over which player will retrieve the ball. Also, when the pitcher is choosing where to place his pitch, the catcher's glove will move in this direction, allowing the batter to see where

the pitch will go. I did discover that if I didn't allow the joystick to return to center position after choosing the type of pitch, I could choose where the pitch would go without the catcher's glove reflecting my choice.

Documentation is generally good, but there are several points which are not covered with left me with questions. For instance, I am unclear as to what the effect of swinging, say, outside has upon the hit. Does this mean that I must swing outside to hit a pitch thrown outside, or will this merely cause an opposite-field hit, regardless of pitch thrown?

Graphics are superb. The pitcher's windup and pitch is shown with very smooth animation. Base-runners are also animated very smoothly. Sound is used well, although it is not as extraordinary as the graphics. I was not able to crash the program, short of pressing System Reset, which will reboot the system.

Hardball is well worth looking into for any fan of computer sports simulations. Personally, I still prefer Star League Baseball for solo play, mainly because of the increased control it gives me over the players. However, this is purely subjective, and in no way reflects upon the quality of the program. Hardball should prove very popular, and I look forward to future offerings from Accolade.



IMPORTANT!

WE NEED A CCD REP!

The position of CCD representative is one of the easiest, and one of the most important, jobs you could do for the club. If we do not have a CCD rep, we WILL be kicked out of the CCD and no longer be allowed to meet at the INFOMART.

The CCD rep's job is to attend CCD meetings and represent DAL-ACE. CCD meetings are held the Monday after the normal monthly user group meeting at 7:30 p.m., and may soon be bi-monthly.

THIS IS IMPORTANT! The very SURVIVAL of our club is on the line! If you want DAL-ACE to keep meeting at the INFOMART...

VOLUNTEER NOW!

INTERLINK ST

Reviewed by John Pellet

INTERLINK ST is a new communications software package from Intersect Software in Florida. Suggested retail price is \$39.95. It is not copy-protected. Since I was unable to find a local stock, I ordered directly.

INTERLINK is a two screen system, one being the 80 column terminal mode, the other the GEM screen where you can do all the neat functions not duplicated by the function keys. INTERLINK uses the function keys but allows you to set 20 via the Alt- and Control-F1-10 combinations.

When INTERLINK is loaded the first time, most users will set up the dial directory. Each dial directory holds up to 20 phone numbers, along with RS-232 and system settings, along with logon parameters. From this dial menu, INTERLINK supports dialing once, repeatedly, or in any user defined sequence of the 20 entries. You can set the modem response expected so even non-Hayes modems are supported.

INTERLINK supports multiple file transfer protocols. Xmodem, including automatic CRC and slow-response modes for busy packet systems, ymodem, which can be faster, ASCII, using xon/xoff, prompting, and CR/LF stripping options, and a loadable setting for future enhancements. The only apparently lacking version is an ASCII echo, where it waits for each echoed character before sending the next one.

RS-232 buffer size, along with the capture buffer, are part of the startup settings, again user-settable. In addition to the normal system parameters, INTERLINK offers a 48 line mode in high res, along with word wrap, translation tables, and VT52 emulation. Future terminal emulations are intended, supported by a user-loaded emulation choice.

INTERLINK supports all standard TOS disk functions, like format, show, print, and copy. In addition, the format will create either 360K or 400K sides. You can also execute another program from within INTERLINK (to arc that upload?), assuming you have enough RAM, and that your host will wait for you (remember you can set the RS-232 buffer).

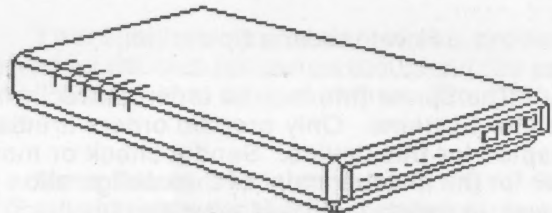
All of the above seems a rather normal list of expected features in a good terminal program. INTERLINK has them, plus a couple that take it to the realm of the extraordinary.

First, INTERLINK has a rather complete remote user function, allowing users to call your

computer and leave messages, upload and download files, and so forth. Three access levels are supported, allowing minimal, medium, and full access to your system. Each is protected by a password that you set, so you can grant different friends different access levels to your machine. Either a hardware or software modem auto answer is fully supported.

INTERLINK allows the user to "record" all mouse selections and keystrokes, then "save" them to disk for later "replay." I use a recording played at startup (automatically) to call up the dial menu, but it can also be used to automate message retrieval or similar tasks from a remote system. And you can tell INTERLINK the clock time at which you want it to play a "recording." This is an extremely POWERFUL feature implemented in a very user friendly fashion.

In summary, while the current version has a few irritations (like the system always starts with the capture buffer on, and there seems to be no way to reset the connect timer) and bugs (word wrap doesn't appear to work), this is the first serious challenger to FLASH I've seen. It is even more user-friendly, equally powerful (excepting emulations), and can act like a mini-BBS.



THE SPIDER (tm) HARDWARE REVIEW

The Spider (tm) is the name of a series of intelligent serial interfaces. These devices contain four or eight RS232 compatible serial ports, 8K, 64K or 256K of memory, and their own processor and operating system, programmable from a computer attached to one of the ports.

Uses for the Spider (tm) range from operating a multiline BBS from one serial port of a computer to sharing printers and other serial devices among several computers. Simple networking schemes between computers can also be set up using a Spider (tm).

Basically, the Spider (tm) is a device based on a 65C02 and has four or eight RS232 ports under direct control of that processor. The controlling computer connects to port 0 and other devices are connected to the remaining ports. Various combinations where some of the programming is done on the controlling computer and some is uploaded to run on the Spider (tm) is possible.

Programming the Spider (tm)

Since the Spider (tm) does have its own processor (the 65C02) and memory (8K, 64K, 256K or 1 meg) it was programmed to allow software to be added to it by uploading from the controlling computer.

The Spider (tm) is a computer, with the CPU, RAM, ROM and I/O ports. A memory map and instructions for programming are available. Some instruction, adequate for most general applications, is included in the user manual supplied with the Spider (tm). For more specific applications and for programmers intending to create packages to market, there is also a developer's kit available, which contains much more detailed information about how to program the Spider (tm).

Currently, all programming intended for upload to the Spider (tm) must be written in 65C02 machine language. However, there are a few people working on various interpreters for the Spider (tm). When these interpreters are complete it will be possible to program the Spider (tm) directly using a terminal emulator.

How to order a Spider (tm)

The Spider (tm) may be ordered directly from Nite Lite Systems. Only prepaid orders are being accepted for this device. Send a check or money order for the exact amount of the configuration you request, including the 5% Mass. sales tax if you are ordering from a Massachusetts address, plus \$5.00 for shipping and handling to:

Nite Lite Systems
P.O. Box R
Billerica, MA 01821

Currently, the four-port Spider (tm) and the developer's kit (a four-port Spider (tm) and developer's documentation, plus access to more help on-line) are available. Allow 2-4 weeks for delivery. Pricing as follows:

Product	Base price	Incl. Ship.
4-port Spider (tm)	\$199.95	\$204.95
Developer's kit	\$299.95	\$304.95

Any questions concerning this product can be directed to the SysOp either in any message base on this BBS or in a logoff comment. If you wish to be contacted by telephone, leave your name and telephone number in a logoff comment along with other information required to return your call. If you want your name added to our mailing list, leave a logoff comment requesting that and include your name and address with zip code. Dealer and distributor inquiries are invited.

WIFE'S LETTER

by W. J. Parsons in Diablo Talley (Pg News)
reprinted from JACC

To My Darling Husband:

I am sending you this letter in a bogus software company envelope so that you will be sure to read it. Please forgive the deception, but I thought you should know what has been going on at home since your computer entered our lives two years ago.

The children are doing well. Tommy is seven now and is a bright, handsome boy. He has developed quite an interest in the arts. He drew a family portrait for a school project. All the figures were good, but yours was excellent! The chair and the back of your head are very realistic. You would be very proud of him.

Little Jennifer turned three in July. She looks a lot like you did at that age. She is an attractive child and quite smart. She still remembers that you spent the whole afternoon with us on her birthday. What a grand day for Jen, despite the fact that it was stormy and the electricity was out.

I am also doing well. I went blonde about a year ago and am delighted to discover that it really is more fun! Lars -- I mean Mr. Swenson, the department head -- has taken an interest in my career and has become a good friend to us all. I have discovered that household chores are much easier since I realized that you didn't mind being vacuumed but that feather dusting made you sneeze.

The house is in good shape. I had the living room painted last spring. I'm not sure you noticed it. I made sure the painters cut air holes in the drop cloth so that you wouldn't be disturbed.

Well, my dear, I must be going. Uncle Lars -- I mean Mr. Swenson, is taking us all on a ski trip and there is packing to do. I have hired a housekeeper to take care of things while we are away. She'll keep things in order, fill your coffee cup, and bring your meals to your desk, just the way you like it. I hope you and the computer have a lovely time while we are gone. Tommy, Jen, and I will think of you often -- try to remember us while your disks are booting.

Love, Mary

BUREAUCRACY FROM INFOCOM

Reviewed by Angela Burns

RETAIL PRICE: \$39.95 for both 8-bit & ST versions

BUREAUCRACY is the latest text adventure from INFOCOM, long the leader in such things, and Doug Adams, author of The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy.

Available for both the 8-bit and ST computers, BUREAUCRACY was inspired by Mr. Adams' adventures with a bank change-of-address card (not a pretty story). After a move, his checks and credit cards were mailed to the wrong address, and he found it time-consuming and frustrating to get them to acknowledge and correct the error. Even after everything had been "set right," they sent him a letter of apology - to his OLD address!

The documentation is cute, but it has nothing whatsoever to do with the game (as far as I can tell). It mimics those ludicrous public service booklets that companies and agencies so love: a little story about your move and your relationship with Filmore Fiduciary Bank, illustrated like a 1957 elementary school textbook. Included is a credit application which you are to fill out with the enclosed skinny pencil. Once you do that, look at the two carbons - the questions on the carbons are different from those you answered on the top copy! Some of them are really hilarious! There is no score displayed in the usual way in BUREAUCRACY; instead, your blood pressure reading is shown at the top right corner of the screen. Every time something irritating happens to you, your bp goes up; when things are going well, it returns to normal. You are given your score upon quitting the game.

All this should give you some clue to what it's like to play BUREAUCRACY. As usual with INFOCOM and with Adams, the game is interspersed with witticisms; but after half an hour or so of play, you're not sure they're so funny any more. This has got to be one of the most frustrating games I have ever seen! You can't get your mail, the bank is closed (when it's open it might just as well be closed), your U.S. Excess card has expired, you don't have any cash; in short, your life is a nightmare. And do you think in a month I have figured out what to do about ANY of this? Not on your life! I have never seen a game where EVERYTHING one can think of to do is so utterly USELESS! I am even beginning to suspect that there is not really any way to win the thing - maybe in a few months, INFOCOM will announce that the entire thing was a hoax! (I have a rich fantasy life, don't you think?)

You would think all this frustration would make a person hate this game, but just the opposite

is true. I am positively addicted to it, even though I can count on dying of high blood pressure within half an hour of the beginning of each session. BUREAUCRACY is a real challenge. I think you'll enjoy it.

NOTE: Personally, I think it's a good idea to buy the hint book for BUREAUCRACY when you buy the game. However, you may want to know that the hint books are not yet available at this writing. Don't say I didn't warn you!



TOYS FOR TOTS

This year we will once again sponsor a TOYS FOR TOTS event at our December meeting. Last year was a lot of fun, and we raised some money for a good cause, too! So we're hoping to see you all join in this year to make it even better than the last one.

There will be an auction of the products received by the club for review throughout the year, as well as any that club members thoughtfully donate.

Marc Salas, who also ran the TOYS FOR TOTS meeting last year, will be in charge. He needs volunteers for set-up, etc. Contact him via either BBS or corral a board member to let us know you'll be volunteering.

SWAP MEET COMING UP!

At the September DAL-ACE meeting, we'll be doing something new. We're having a swap meet!

If you've got some old hardware or software around that you don't use, now is the perfect time to unload it! Just fill out the form below and give it to any officer by September 1 to get a table. There will be a small charge for a swap meet table - \$1.00 or 10% of sales, whichever is less! Can't do better than that!

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

SEE YA THERE!

SILENT BUTLER

Reviewed by Bill Sheppard

Reprinted courtesy Computing Today, found on GENIE

SCORECARD:

Features - 7	Installation - 10
Performance - 8	Ease of Use - 8
Error Handling - 10	Documentation - 5
Compatibility - 8	Support - 8

From: Atari Corporation, Sunnyvale, CA 94086

Suggested List: \$34.95

Silent Butler is another addition to the arsenal of home bookkeeping programs published for the Atari 8-bit computers. It offers a number of features unique to this type of program, as well as being one of the easiest to use. This is also one of the first new releases from Atari Corporation for the XL/XE series of computers since Tramiel & company took over.

Silent Butler is designed to manage your checking and saving accounts, pay your bills, keep your tax records, and maintain an appointment book. With the purchase of the optional Checkholder, you can have your printer pay your bills using your existing checks.

Silent Butler will maintain three checking and three savings accounts. The program will allow 1330, 637, and 315 annual entries for the three checking accounts, respectively, and 231, 182, and 168 annual entries for the three savings accounts. It will also store up to 78 birthdays / anniversaries / reminders, and inform you of them if desired. The program will maintain tax records, such as categorizing income and expenses, and summarize them in a format allowing you to directly transfer them over to your tax form.

The program isn't copy-protected, but you will need a sector copier to back-up the program disk. Upon first booting the program (you needn't press OPTION when booting), you will be asked to insert your data disk. Silent Butler will recognize that you have not previously entered data, and ask you for start-up information. The process is straightforward and well-documented on-screen. Upon subsequent bootings, after inserting the data disk, you'll only be asked for the current date.

Silent Butler's daily operation is styled as if you have a butler inquiring as to what duties you'd like him to perform. While this style makes referring to the manual largely unnecessary, it also makes requests for information very lengthy, which becomes annoying after becoming familiar with the program. As an example, here is the dialogue

presented for entering today's date. With your permission, might I take just a moment of your time to request today's date for my daily journal? ... Are we still in the year 1986? ... And what month of 1986 might we be in? ... May I ask what day of September 1986 this is? ... My daily journal now indicates that it is September 2, 1986 ... Is this correct? As you can see, while this style makes it very clear as to what information is desired, reading through all the prompts becomes tedious very quickly. Perhaps if an option for less verbose prompts was provided, this problem could be sidestepped.

In keeping with the style of a butler, there is a daily routine which is presented. The butler will first ask if there have been any changes to your checking account (location or account number, for example). He will then ask if you have any new dates you would like to be reminded of. Next, you'll be asked whether you would like to add or delete any fixed bills (monthly bills of a constant value, such as rent or car payment). You'll then be asked about any savings account activity, and then checking account activity. This process continues through a set routine, after which you'll be asked if you would like to review the routine again to cover any items you might have missed. Again, this routine makes the program easy to use, but you must wade through many unnecessary prompts to complete the routine. For example, each time you use the program, you will be asked if you have changed printer type or changed the bank your accounts are at. Since these are done very infrequently, I feel that these questions shouldn't be part of the main routine, but rather be accessible through a special options question. There is a menu option, but this is a completely hidden feature, mentioned only in the manual, and briefly at that.

Silent Butler has the ability, with the purchase of the Checkholder, to pay your bills by actually printing on your checks. There is an order form for the Checkholder packaged with the software. Cost is \$6.95 each, plus \$2 for shipping. The Checkholder is a mylar sheet, with cut-outs to hold standard-sized checks. Instructions are included in the documentation for customizing the Checkholder to work with each Atari printer, and it should work with most non-Atari printers.

Silent Butler performs most of its operations well, and there is very little time spent waiting for processing. The reminder feature would be more useful if it only displayed those events upcoming, rather than all events throughout the year, but this is a minor point. Also, at certain times throughout the program, 'Big Ben' chimes are played (to instill an air of snobbery associated with having a butler, I suppose). These are an unnecessary time delay, and are only amusing once.

The biggest feature lacking from Silent Butler present in some of the other home-accounting programs, such as The Home Accountant or Your Personal Net Worth, is the ability to track charge accounts. While you can print a summary of all bills paid to a given firm, such as Visa, you may not itemize individual charges, as you can in the previously mentioned programs.

Silent Butler is unquestionably easier to use than the other programs of its type currently available. Because of the narrative style of the prompts, referring to the manual is very seldom necessary after initially reading through it. Accounts are created automatically when you pay a bill to a firm previously not encountered, and all actions which could change any data are followed by an 'Are you sure...' prompt. One poorly designed prompt was 'Do any of these need to be corrected?', which will generally require a 'N' response, whereas the more customary 'Are these correct' will usually be answered with a 'Y'. Since this prompt is phrased in a reverse fashion, careful reading is necessary to prevent making a mistake.

I found it impossible to crash Silent Butler, short of pressing SYSTEM RESET, which reboots the computer. The only bug I found was that after printing a check, which requires the printer to do half-line feeds, the printer isn't reset, so if printing a summary you will have overlapping lines. This may not be the case on all types of printers, however.

Documentation consists of a 16 page manual, which doesn't really adequately describe many of the features.

Silent Butler requires a disk drive capable of writing in 1050-dual density mode. This means that 810 drives cannot be used. While only Atari printers are provided for in the printer selection menu, Epson-compatible printers can be used by choosing the XMM-801 printer.

Atari's usual customer support hassles can be expected, including much difficulty getting through to an actual person, much less one with some knowledge of the program.

Silent Butler is a competent, reasonably priced software package for those wishing to perform light home bookkeeping without spending a lot of time learning to use accounting software. For those wishing to keep more extensive records, as well as do budgeting, you'd do well to pass this one by and look at Your Personal Net Worth or The Home Accountant.

SELECTING A PROGRAMMING LANGUAGE MADE EASY

Daniel Salomon & David Rosenblueth

Department of Computer Science, University of Waterloo
Waterloo, Ontario, Canada N2L 3G1

With such a large selection of programming languages, it can be difficult to choose one for a particular project. Reading the manuals to evaluate the languages is a time consuming process. On the other hand, most people already have a fairly good idea of how various automobiles compare. So in order to assist those trying to choose a language, we have prepared a chart that matches programming languages with comparable automobiles.

Assembler - A formula 1 race car. Very fast, but difficult to drive and expensive to maintain.

FORTRAN II - A Model T Ford. Once it was king of the road.

FORTRAN IV - A Model A Ford.

FORTRAN 77 - A six-cylinder Ford Fairlane with standard transmission and no seat belts.

COBOL - A delivery van. It's bulky and ugly, but it does the work.

BASIC - A second-hand Rambler with a rebuilt engine and patched upholstery. Your dad bought it for you to learn to drive. You'll ditch the car as soon as you can afford a new one.

PL/I - A Cadillac convertible with automatic transmission, a two-tone paint job, white-wall tires, chrome exhaust pipes, and fuzzy dice hanging in the windshield.

C - A black Firebird, the all-macho car. Comes with optional seat belts (lint) and optional fuzz buster (escape to assembler).

ALGOL 60 - An Austin Mini. Boy, that's a small car!

Pascal - A Volkswagen Rabbit with a trailer hitch.

ALGOL 68 - An Astin Martin. An impressive car, but not just anyone can drive it.

LISP - An electric car. It's simple but slow. Seat belts are not available.

PROLOG/LUCID - Prototype concept-cars.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 13)

DAL - ACE

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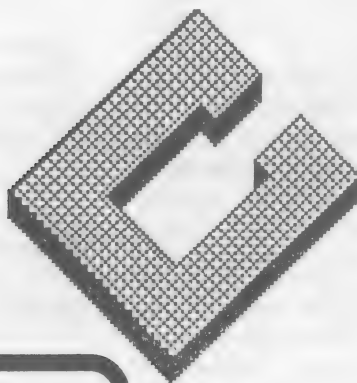
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RAM

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11)
Maple/MACSYMA - All-terrain vehicles

FORTH - A go-cart.

LOGO - A kiddie's replica of a rolls Royce. Comes with a real engine and a working horn.

APL - A double-decker bus. It takes rows and columns of passengers to same place all at the same time. But, it drives only in reverse gear, and is instrumented in Greek.

Ada - An army-green Mercedes-Benz staff car. Power steering, power brakes and automatic transmission are all standard. No other colors or options are available. If it's good enough for the generals, it's good enough for you. Manufacturing delays due to difficulties reading the design specifications are starting to clear up.

GATEWAY

FROM Pryority Software

Reviewed by Angela Burns

RETAIL PRICE: locally as low as \$19.95

GATEWAY is a text adventure with graphics. In the story, your uncle Bert has disappeared and been declared dead. As his sole heir, you inherit a decrepit office building in a bad part of town. As you sift through the junk, hoping to find something of value; you come across his journal, which tells of a gateway to another dimension located within the building. You must find the gateway and prevent some kind of great evil from entering Earth through it.

The documentation was written for the Macintosh; an insert was added for the ST. Nevertheless, it is nice. You have a letter from Bert's lawyer that tells you of your inheritance and part of Bert's journal (which has been smeared at just the perfect, most irritating place). The only feature not implemented on the ST is the "panic button", which replaces the game screen with a spreadsheet on the Mac. Perhaps the manufacturers realize Atari owners have more integrity than SOME people we could name, and therefore have no need of a panic button.

The first and best of GATEWAY's good points is the fact that the same copy of the game will run on either a color or a monochrome system. That's nice for us po' folks who don't yet have color.

GATEWAY features pictures for many scenes in the game, which you may call up by clicking on the picture option. These pictures are interesting, and provide invaluable help in playing the

game. The colors are a little strange in the color version, but you can change them. You can point and click on any item within a picture, and a help screen will pop up to tell you about it (if there is anything to tell). Point and click on a path or doorway in a picture and the game will move you in that direction.

The instructions say that you can't have pictures on a one-drive system. I have been doing it anyway, but I anticipate that at some point it will cause problems with the game and I'll have to start over. On a 520 with no upgrade, there's not enough memory to load the pictures onto a RAMdisk. What I've been doing is just clicking on "B" when the program asks what drive the pictures are on; then I just get the usual "insert disk B into drive A" prompt. Since it appears to work so far, this may not be a problem.

The menu bar features on-line hints, which you can access at any time; you don't have to sink another \$7 into a hint book to save what little sanity you have left. However, you lose a point if you click on HINTS, even if you then choose not to take a hint.

If you do, the number of points lost is determined by how much of a hint you took. AND there are some points in the game where a hint would be invaluable (I'm stuck at such a point right now), but the program just tells you, "You're on your own here."

The parser seems somewhat limited, but that may just be a series of badly worded commands on my part. It's not a serious problem, but there have been times when I just couldn't seem to make myself understood to the machine.

There is a little box with the compass directions in it; you can save a little typing by pointing and clicking on the directions, but not enough to get all worked up over.

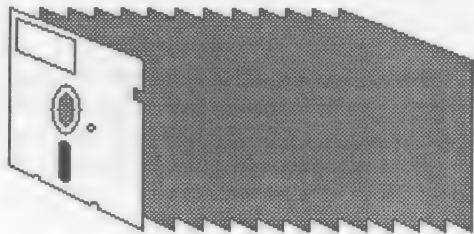
It seems that you cannot carry as many things at one time when playing in color as you can in monochrome. This may be because your inventory box is smaller, due to the lower screen resolution. Again, it's probably not a problem; after all, if you can't carry them, you must not need 'em.

The backup policy is SILLY. The cost and procedures for getting a replacement disk are the same for during the warranty period as they are for afterwards. What is the use of having a warranty if it doesn't get you anything you don't get without it?

Their method of copy protection is ingenious - you must have the "Artex prints" (three of them) in order to get through key points in the game. Take my word for it - if you don't look at the picture, you CANNOT solve the puzzle involved. I tried using just the hints and not looking at the first picture, and gave the command, "PRESS THE BUTTON." I was

answered with "which button do you mean?" After trying top, bottom, black red, green, square, etc. (you get the picture), I gave up and dug out the print. There is NO button in that scene. There are things to get and manipulate in the scene, and there is no mention made of these items anywhere else but in the prints. I'm just glad it didn't ASSUME I was a pirate and erase itself or something. The instructions say that the color of some of the objects in these pictures is important to game play - so xerox copies of the prints wouldn't save you if you had an illegal copy. Very clever, and I can still make backup copies all day long if I want to!

All in all, I would say GATEWAY is worth the investment. It's fun and fairly challenging to play. The plot is interesting, and the makers are fair enough to let us make backups. Not bad for twenty bucks!



NEW 8-BIT DISK! #87 - DAISY DOT

Michael Duke, our 8-bit disk librarian, presents the latest of our club's 5 1/4" disks - DAISY DOT.

DAISY DOT prints listed text files in near letter quality mode on standard Gemini and Epson or Epson compatible printers that DO NOT have NLQ capability. You can choose from several NLQ fonts, also included on the disk.

As an added plus, there is also a font editor for creating your own NLQ fonts.

You won't believe the quality of these fonts until you see them for yourself! DAISY DOT is the perfect, inexpensive way to upgrade the quality of your printer's output without spending 20 million dollars on a new printer.

This is a fine example of the great public domain programs available in the Atari community (and, incidentally, in our terrific pd library). At a time when commercial software for the 8-bit line is dwindling, dedicated Atari users are creating the much needed software that will keep our Atari 8-bit computers alive and productive for years to come.

ONLY \$3.00 !!!

PC DITTO INTRODUCTION

We would like to introduce ourselves: we are Avant-Garde Systems, manufacturer of pc-ditto for the Atari ST. The company is small, comprised of just two of us - Ginny and Bill Teal.

First and most importantly, we wish to thank everyone who has supported us so far on just blind faith: dealers as well as consumers. In particular, we wish to say a special thanks to those on this message base who have carried the torch on our behalf until we could get here: Dave and Sara Groves, Jeff Williams, and Jack Duree'.

Piracy - We know that some rumors abound regarding the piracy of pc-ditto and the effect on Avant-Garde. We would like to go on record and eliminate any pesky rumors you've heard. A couple of weeks ago, we began to receive calls from dealers regarding piracy of our product. Not one or two, but in our phone log, now well over a hundred; fairly well scattered across the country. This might not seem unusual in this electronic age, but we were astounded by the sheer numbers of individuals who began contacting dealers and ourselves for support and disk drives. When we originally decided to enter the retail marketplace, we took into consideration that some piracy would occur. This, like similar events in other industries, goes with the territory. But, it still hurt our feelings, after we tried to give the market a good product, at a good price, a free update, and to offer to listen to the market so as to improve the product and service in the future.

So, are we going out of business or do we plan to roll over? No. Thank goodness for those of you who supported us. You have shown us that the entire Atari market is not corrupt. Only, that it sometimes seems so. If you continue your support, and your friends continue, then we will work even harder to earn your respect, to provide you the best support we can and keep all the promises we've made. Maybe, if by providing great support, more updates, and maintaining good prices, most people who want the product will ultimately want the real thing.

Support policy - Please send in your registration cards. Many manufacturers tell us that only 20 to 30 percent of these cards are ever returned. We are providing a free update. This will be the only way we will know where and to whom to send an update. Also, if you call us, we can not help you if your card is not on file. Lastly, we are making the next update free, as a way to entice you to tell us what you think. The next update will contain enhancements, rather than bug fixes. But, we want your input. We do want the product to be useful to you. So, call, write, or send a message to us here (Compuserve).

Finally, many of you may find it hard obtaining pc-ditto at your local dealer. We are working on this. We have one phone line. We are installing others. Also, we did not expect the overwhelming rush to buy this product. We had anticipated a slow summer in which to build up our credibility and advertise to dealers. Instead, you surprised us. Have patience. We won't forget you.

By the way, our address is: Avant-Garde Systems
381 Pablo Point Drive Jacksonville, Florida 32225
(904) 221-2904 A dealer order number is coming shortly.

DESIGN OF PC-DITTO

The Atari monochrome monitor (which we refer to henceforth as the Black and white or B/W) is not supported in production release version 2.0. Please do not buy the system if you have only the B/W monitor; pc-ditto will not work. There has been some confusion over whether the documentation or the outside packaging is correct. The "requirements" on the outside back of the packaging is correct. The B/W monitor support will be included in the first update. We make no apologies for our initial decision. Unfortunately, this decision excludes about 20 percent of the U.S. market (according to Richard Frick and Sig Hartman at Atari). Quite simply, we did not have sufficient time and resources to implement and test the monitor. Do we want to exclude this market? No. We are probably losing money right now. But, any manufacturer has to weigh opportunity costs of decisions. Our cost was to not support B/W monitor, or delay announcement of the product by 3 to 6 months. We knew the window of opportunity for launching this product was this summer for both U.S. and European sales. Any later would most likely mean missing targets for advertising and promotions during the "back-to-school" and "Holiday season" buying periods. Approximately 40 percent of the microcomputer sales are made during these periods.

That is why we officially state the B/W monitor support will be in the first update.

Furthermore, we have been told by a major magazine reviewer regarding our product: we made the wisest decision. Had we chosen to initially support the B/W monitor, most people would have said "Ahhhh. Color is impossible." Instead, psychologically, implementing color makes people think B/W is simple. (Well, we wouldn't go quite as far as to say, simple. Just that it is about the same). In any case, there is one other rule we have about products. They are tested. Should we prematurely release an untested product into the market, you would have to wait just about as long to get an update to fix it, should it be a disaster. We prefer your wrath now, and will work harder to recover your faith, when we release a solidly tested product. In the first instance, we destroy something we can never quite recover: your confidence in us and our product.

80-track 5.25" drives - not currently supported to read 40-track media (even if just to transfer data). We are working on a simple, utility which will get the job done under DOS. This will be out shortly. If enough need is voiced for this, we can always make a "hardware" switch, later.

Programs on our certified list - my wife and I have limited financial resources. We tried to select DOS applications which have widespread appeal. Our most objective score card of the most popular programs is the list of top 40 IBM programs sold by the distributors: Softsel, Ingram, and Micro D. We will continue to update this list about monthly; here, and with a list to dealers. If your favorite program is not here, that does not mean it will not work. But, like many compatibles, we are not perfect. (That's why we sell through dealers.. so you can try before you buy).

As we fix bugs and make other improvements, many non-working programs may start running. And, we appreciate all the calls you make regarding which do run. Please understand, our official list is only updated when we have tested the product ourselves. We make this policy because if you call with a problem, we can duplicate it (in most cases). For you to rely on someone else's word is less than professional for us, since we have to stand behind our product.

We never realized there would be such a debate over the poor little mouse. It certainly makes sense that if a mouse is attached, and free, that a product support it. Well, when we surveyed the market to determine what dealers and consumers wanted, we were told "IBM PC XT compatibility." So, there is no mouse on a stock PC XT. Also, most of the programs on the market directly do not support any mouse at all. What you will find is when you purchase a mouse, it will include two kinds of software: a mouse driver - which knows how to talk to the mouse hardware; and applications interface software - which is usually custom-designed for the most popular applications, such as Lotus 1-2-3, and includes the pull-down menus, and the like.

We intend to provide the driver. And, a generic mouse which generates cursor keystrokes, with maybe the right button to generate a user definable key (say, carriage return). Now, either will be selectable from our menu. At this time, unless you already own IBM mouse interface software, from Microsoft, Logitech, Maynard, etc, then you may end up using Generic mouse. The cost of developing interface software is very large. Any one looking for a low cost market to develop for, here you are. Of course, there are some public domain mice programs, such as PMM (poor man's mouse), available. We will keep you posted as we go.

DAL - ACE

There is no support for the European keyboards and timers yet. That version will be released to European distributors this summer. The new blitter may help some screen updates, but we don't know. Little information about them, and the machines they will be supported on, is currently available.

Megas with 2 and 4 Meg memories, as well as upgraded 1.5 to 4 Meg STs will be supported by pc-ditto.

Color text support - One IBM CGA mode, 80 column text, permits 16 color backgrounds and 8 color characters. The Atari ST only supports 4 colors in 80 column mode. We DO allow you to choose which 4 colors. Unfortunately, this is one limitation placed on us by hardware design. However, we have not found this to be very limiting. Try it yourself, before discounting the ST. Also, the other CGA modes are supported fully. Therefore, there is no loss of graphic color or resolution capability.

CURRENT BUGS

PC-DFMT doesn't always like to format a blank disk without error. Hard disks partitioned sometimes indicate all logical drives assigned to partition 0. This especially true of separate external drive/controller combinations.

DOCUMENTATION:

We refer to TOS system disks in the manual. We mean GEMDOS format disks. We refer to the Atari monochrome monitor in the manual. At the last minute, we left this in so we would not have to reprint the manual for an update. We do state on the outside package, however, that color monitor is currently required. There are minor typos in the Problem/ solution section in the README.1st file.

Self-booting disks - These are disks which require no operating system to run. Generally, they are started using the CTRL-ALT-DEL key combination of rebooting pc-ditto. We perform a special check of the boot sector we start a disk with to ensure novice users have not left the GEMDOS disk in the A: drive accidentally. Unfortunately, as these things go, we look for a special IBM signature. To correct this, we will look for GEMDOS in the future. Please do not patch the system. You WILL cause irregularities in system operation, especially where disk writes occur.

NEXT UPDATE INFORMATION

The next update to current owners of version 2.0 is FREE. Contrary to some nasty rumors that suggested otherwise. The next update will be this Fall. Exactly when we do not know. As a policy, we

announce products when they can be obtained right then. The software development road is littered with many dead bodies of consumers who relied on some vaporware date. Until someone can make an exact science out of the viscous art of software development, we are stuck with the frailties of the inestimatable.

Please, please, send those registration cards to us. Again, we do not know who you are without them. Consequently, we will not send you your update...which you deserve and have already paid for. The reason for the FREE part of the update is two-fold. First, we don't believe in you paying us for bugs. If we did, we would have designed bugs into the system, marketed several add-on modules to fix different bugs, and charged a lower price for the main product. We would like to treat you the way we want to be treated ourselves.

Second, we want to encourage you to let us know what enhancements will add value to your product. We are a consumer-oriented company. We do not invent technologies and foist them onto the public. Instead, we know that the way to continue sales is to improve the product and service to meet your needs. Sales only occur when needs are met. So,.....what do you need? Don't be afraid to be absurd (though, don't just make things up either). We will review your needs. Implement those needs we can. If we can not, we will also tell you, and why. We are always looking for ways to improve our product. We're listening. Topping the current list of needs are: B/W monitor support (next release) Mouse support: Microsoft, et al Midi hardware support Time/date carry over from Atari

GEM SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Which single-sided 3.5" disk format to boot DOS from? Our utility, pc-dfmt, will not let you create a single-sided 80-track bootable DOS diskette, because the DOS you may be using could be lower than version 3.2. Thus, for DOS versions below 3.2, you may only create a 40-track single-sided bootable DOS diskette. You may, however, create 80-track data diskettes (containing no bootable DOS) for use under DOS versions below 3.2. See our user manual and README.1ST file for details. For DOS version 3.2, there is a simpler way to format high-capacity diskettes. You may also create bootable (that's right Bootable) 80-track single-sided DOS diskettes. This works for IBM and COMPAQ DOS versions. (For all other DOS makers, we haven't tested this). Create a Config.sys file containing the line:DRIVPARM=/D:x/T:80/S:9/H:1 (replace x with a 0 or 1 depending on which physical drive is 3.5": 0 is a: 1 is b:) Now, using the DOS FORMAT command, you can create the SS 80-track disk, optionally bootable with DOS.

Can't Avant-Garde find a way to override the DOS drives to reduce the confusion regarding device drivers with various letter assignments. Unfortunately, our job is to act like hardware. Once we begin to take over the functions of the DOS, we lose the compatibility and would probably introduce complexities in other areas. However, if you think you know the answer, let us know. Thanks.

Can't Avant-Garde make the creation of the CONFIG.SYS and the formatting more automatic, say by using batch files? Maybe. We'll look into it. Everyone's hardware is so different, making a general purpose utility to accomplish this may still be quite a task. Any DOS programmers out there up to the challenge? (How about a DOS shell?) This is perhaps why many of you, inexperienced with DOS, may find that the GEM environment is so much easier to use. The command line approach to running a microcomputer is difficult and often ambiguous. Add to that the evolution of new hardware, even as simple as 3.5" drives, and some systems seem to be very poorly designed to handle it, without extreme contortions on the part of the operator. Anyway, we're looking into some sort of simplification.

Isn't there some way to improve the creation of 3.5" 720K disks? This is a problem inherent in the design of DOS. We will try to find the simplest and best way to create them. Let us hear your success tips. Maybe we can come up with the all around best "cookbook" rules to handle DOS formats.

OOPS!

On the cover of our June issue, we inadvertently omitted the credit for the cover art. The pictures on the cover that month were drawn using Migraph, Inc.'s EASY DRAW 2.0. We're sorry for any inconvenience caused by the oversight.

NEW ST DISKS!

We have four new disks in the ST library this month:

AIM - Atari Image Manager. An image processing program that works in either monochrome or color. Allows you to enhance graphic images.

AIM UTILITIES - with the advent of these new utilities, you now have several means to input your own pictures into AIM to be enhanced. Now you can load DEGAS pictures or images scanned with the Seymor-Radix IMG Scan, into AIM.

CITADEL BBS & UTILITIES - A complete bulletin board system for the ST on a two-disk set. Includes source code to allow you to customize your BBS.

As far as we know, this is the only public domain BBS system for the ST.

CAD-3D

by Tom Hudson

Antic Software \$49.95

512K, monochrome or color

Reviewed by Bill Sheppard

Reprinted courtesy of Computing Today

Computer-aided design (CAD) is one of the areas in which the increased power of the newest generation of computers has had the greatest influence. In the past, 6502- and 8088-based computers just haven't had the raw computational ability to effectively perform the thousands of mathematical calculations necessary to model even the simplest of objects. With CAD-3D, Tom Hudson not only proves that the Atari ST is a computational powerhouse, he also delivers an extremely capable package at an incredibly reasonable price.

CAD-3D uses a unique approach to creation of objects. Rather than sitting down with pencil and paper and creating a table containing the coordinates of all the nodes (corners) of an object, CAD-3D creates objects through the processes of 'Spin' and 'Extrude'. For instance, to create a cube, the first step would be to use the mouse to put a square on the screen. Then, selecting 'extrude' will expand the object into the third dimension, which in this case would create a cube. Similarly, drawing a circle as the initial object will create a cylinder. The other process to create objects with is 'spin'. This can produce spectacular results with very little effort. Briefly described, an initial shape is entered, and CAD-3D will 'spin' this shape around the vertical axis, creating a three-dimensional object. Spin is excellent for creating solid objects such as light bulbs, hoops, goblets, etc.

By using the processes of 'spin' and 'extrude', along with the pre-defined shapes 'Sphere1', 'Sphere2', 'Sphere3', 'Torus', 'Cube', and 'Wedge', simple objects may be created. Multiple objects may be joined in several ways ('addition', 'subtraction', 'and', 'stamp') to create more complex objects.

Where CAD-3D really 'shines' is in its ability to display objects with different lighting conditions. For instance, if a goblet is created with the 'spin' tool, up to three light sources may be placed in any position relative to the object. When viewed on a color monitor, CAD-3D will use either seven or fourteen shades of color to produce a very realistic image of light reflecting from the various faces of the goblet. With a monochrome monitor, seven shades of gray scale are used, with slightly less impressive results.

I have only scratched the surface of the available options and capabilities of CAD-3D. Many examples are included on the disk, such as a complete scale model of Stonehenge. CAD-3D also includes an auxiliary program allowing you to animate objects, presenting many interesting possibilities. Objects may also be exported into Degas-compatible picture files. CAD-3D is a fascinating, fun, superbly-written program. I found myself spending hours with the program engrossed in the possibilities of the various unique objects that can be created, limited only by my imagination. I highly recommend it.

Public Domain Review

Below is a list and descriptions of some of the better Public Domain programs for the ST. Most are available either in the ST disk library or on the ST BBS.

UTILITIES:

ARC.TTP - File compression program, widely used on all ST BBS's. A must have for all ST owners.

ARCSHELL.PRГ - A shell program for use with ARC.TTP; adds fileselect boxes and dialog boxes to ARC for ease of use.

ATARI800.ARC - Atari 800 emulator for the ST. Incomplete versions are available now. A completed version should be available soon.

AIM - Image enhancer/processor gives amazing control over pictures.

DCOPY - Disk utilities program: format disk, un-arc files, copy files, as well as convert AtariWriter files to ST Writer files.

DN12AIM.PRГ - DEGAS (Batteries Included) to AIM file conversion.

EASYDRWF.ARC - New fonts for use with Easy Draw (MIGRAPH, Inc.).

EMACS371.ARC - Latest version of Micro Emacs program editor. One of the most versatile program editors available.

FORMAT3.ARC - Disk formatting program with a variety of options, allowing the change of number of sectors per track, etc. to get more information on one disk.

GFA_DEMO.ARC - GFA Basic demos. Contains the run only version of GFA Basic (MICHTRON). Another must have for all ST owners.

PCOMMAND.ARC - Probably the best command shell available for the ST (PD that is). Lets you bypass GEM and use DOS-like commands for file maintenance.

PICSW17.ARC - Latest version of Picswitch; now works on monochrome as well as color monitors. With this you can view TINY, DEGAS, MacPAINT, and Amiga IFF picture files.

PRDRV1.ARC - An update to the fonts and printer drivers supplied with the first release of Publishing Partner (SoftLogik). If you have PP and don't have these fonts then you definitely need this.

SPOOL.TTP - A print spooler. Type in the number of K desired for your spooler, up to 63K, and speed up printing dramatically.

STW170.ARC - ST Writer, a full featured Public Domain word processor. It is not GEM based, but in certain respects it is better than some commercial word processors.

ST_INTRO.ARC - A program that walks the first time user of an ST through the proper use of the GEM desktop. Great for the new ST owner.

TINYV3.ARC - The most recent version of Tinyview, which will let you view TINY format compressed pictures.

UNITERM17B.ARC - Public Domain terminal program with VT-102 emulation, and many different file transfer protocols; very full featured.

This is the first time we have had an article like this in the newsletter. If you would like to see more articles like this one let your editor know. Also, if you know of a great public domain program for either the 8-bit or ST, give the name and a short description to the editor and we can put it in the newsletter so that everyone else will know about it. Next month I will try to cover some of the great ST PD games out there, and maybe we can talk someone into making a list of 8-bit PD software.

CLASSIFIEDS

FOR SALE: 130XE, Percom SS/DD drive with printer interface, 2 - 810 disk drives with archiver, MPP 1000e modem (300BPS), Koala pad, CX85 keypad, disk holders, Paperclip XE, Printshop series, lots of 8-bit software disks and cartridges for \$5.00 each.

CONTACT: SCOTT PHELAN



NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

Submissions are welcome in ANY form. However, it is extremely helpful if submissions conform to one of these formats:

1. ASCII files with no formatting information
2. On ST format disk
3. Uploaded to either of the DAL-ACE BBS's
4. Publishing Partner file

CURRENT DAL-ACE SCHEDULE

Sunday	August	30	Newsletter Production Meeting - 1:00 P.M. James Duke's house
Saturday	September	12	Main Meeting
Sunday	September	27	Newsletter Production Meeting - 1:00 P.M. James Duke's house
Saturday	October	10	Main Meeting

INFOMART DIRECTIONS

From North Dallas, take either Stemmons (I-35 E) or the Dallas North Tollway. From Stemmons, take the Oak Lawn exit, turn east (left) and park at Infomart, on the left just after you go under Stemmons. If you're using the tollway, exit right on Wycliff, go left on Harry Hines to Oak Lawn and turn right. Infomart will be on your right. From the south, take Stemmons north then follow above. Infomart is the big white steel and glass building south of the other 'marts. The main entrance faces Stemmons. GUESTS ARE WELCOME!!!!

*** MEETING INFORMATION ***

11:00 - 11:30	Main Meeting
11:20 - 12:00	BBS Users
	New Users
	Newsletter Exchange
12:00 - 1:30	ST SIG
1:00 - 2:30	8 BIT SIG

NEWSLETTER ADVERTISEMENTS

Personal sale ads are free to members.
See editor for details.

COMMERCIAL AD RATES

Full Page	\$35.00
Half Page	\$25.00
Quater Page	\$15.00

Long term rates are available. Contact our advertising manager for details.

Ads must be CAMERA READY. Copy must be recieved PRIOR TO the production meeting. Mail copy to address on back page, or contact the advertising manager. Copy received after the deadline will be run the following month. For contract advertisers, if no new copy is received by the deadline, then the most recent ad will be re-run.

SPECIAL THANKS!

We would like to express our appreciation to Megamax, Inc. for allowing us to use their laser printer for our newsletter.

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DAL-ACE

Dallas Atari Computer Enthusiasts

DAL-ACE is an independent, user education group not affiliated with the ATARI Corporation. This is the official newsletter of DAL-ACE and is intended for the education of its members as well as for the dissemination of information about Atari computer products.

DAL-ACE membership is \$16.00 per year. This newsletter is written, edited, and published by volunteers. Its availability and/or distribution may, at times, be subject to circumstances beyond the control of the club officers. Members will note that their renewal date appears on their address label. A pink label means that your membership expires this month!

Other user groups may obtain copies of this newsletter on an exchange basis.

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